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THE ANNUNCIATION. A SKETCH BY CORREGGIO FOR A FRESCO PAINTED IN 1524

Recent Art Acquisitions in American Museums

By Richard Leonard

TWO portraits of unusual importance have been acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, both by the French master, Jean-Baptiste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), one a portrait of Monsieur Leblanc and the other of Madame Leblanc, and painted in Florence, 1823, whither Ingres came in 1820 after his fourteen years in Rome. are companion portraits. In Lapauze's work on Ingres he says of these paintings: "Mme. Leblanc appears charming in the painted portrait. Her attitude has an easy grace, with a certain pride in the erect head on the lovely uncovered neck. One arm is leaning on the back of her chair; the other stretches out on her knees. One sees entirely the drawing of the hands. The gracious head is framed with her curling hair that a ribbon knotted at the right holds in place. Her dress is half décolleté with

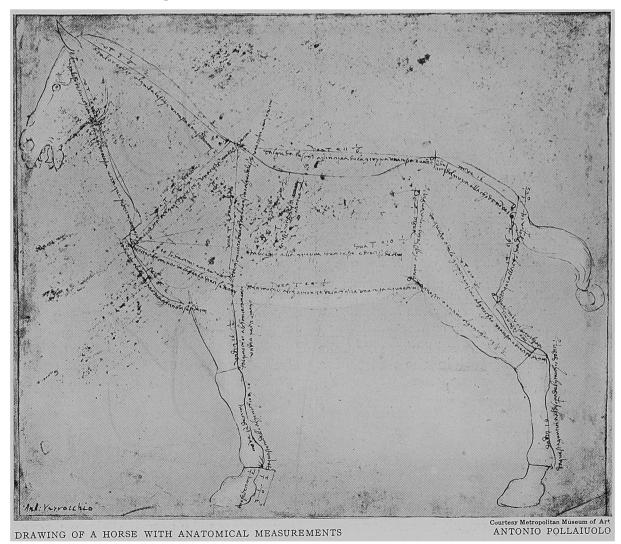
puffed sleeves. The indispensable shawl is thrown over the arm of her chair. Flowers have been placed near her on a little round table. The ensemble is exquisite. M. Leblanc is seated sideways in an office chair. His left arm rests on the corner of a table covered with a carpet on which are seen an inkstand, papers, and books. His right hand, resting on his crossed knees, holds a half-open book. His dress is unstudied, his clothes marked by the creases of use. A large neckerchief is about his shoulders. The painter caught him at his work, somewhat lost in reflection. His expression of concentration shows a man absorbed in his researches, his combinations. This personage so preoccupied in the success of his undertakings forms a somewhat sober, even a gruff contrast to the seductive person, smiling, flowered, jewelled, bearing his name, who faces him." In the Museum of Montaban there are some

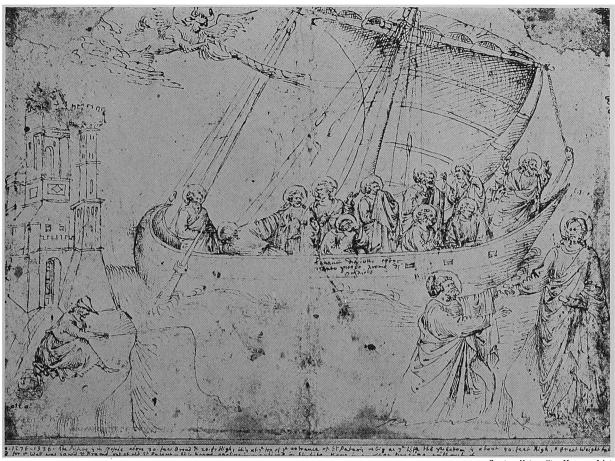


PORTRAIT OF MONSIEUR LEBLANC. BY JEAN-BAPTISTE DOMINIQUE INGRES (1780-1867)

twenty studies for portions of the Portraits of Madame Leblanc, whose hands were accounted the most beautiful in the world. Both these portraits were painted just before Ingres' Vow of Louis XIII made him famous. This was exhibited in 1824 and thenceforward Ingres stood pre-eminent in the art of France of his period. Louis Hourticq (Art in France, Charles Scribner's Sons) says: "We are accustomed to look upon Ingres as the successor of David; but all he had derived from David was his position as the head of the traditional school; no doubt there was room within this school for more than one ideal, for the master and pupil were far from agreeing. The Classicists sought for a beauty somewhat mannered and Alexandrine. . . . Ingres, on the contrary, was very sensible of the charm of the primitive schools, when art absorbed in the desire for truth had no idea of effacing the characteristic accent. . . . The art of David depersonalizes figures; that of Ingres strips them of their personal character, but not of their individuality."

Nineteen drawings purchased at the sale of the Pembroke Collection at Sotheby's in London in July, 1917, by the Metropolitan Museum of Art have now been shown by the Museum for the first time. War conditions prevented the sending over of the collection at an earlier time. The Pembroke Drawings, which belonged to the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery comprised one of the most notable collections of drawings in





LA NAVICELLA.

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
DRAWN COPY OF A MOSAIC BY GIOTTO

Europe. The Annunciation by Correggio here illustrated is a sketch which that master made for a fresco in the Church of the Annunciation at Parma, painted about 1524. In his volume of critical notes, The Pembroke Drawings, S. A. Strong says: "The group is contrived to fill the space and tell the story with something of the masterly comprehension that we admire in a Greek gem, while there is an unearthly sublimity about the angel borne forward in the midst of a cloud that the painter of the Graces rarely achieved."

The Horse with Anatomical Measurements was attributed to Andrea Verrocchio until Bernhard Berensen (in Florentine Drawings) Herbert Horne and Langton Douglas agreed that the handling connects it with Antonio Pollaiuolo. Such studies are extremely interesting as showing how thoroughly the early masters

studied their subjects in every detail.

The drawn copy of a mosaic on the wall of the old Church of St. Peter in Rome, by Giotto, *La Navicella*, probably dates from the middle of the Fourteenth Century. Giotto completed the mosaic in 1298. Berensen attributes the drawing to an early Sienese draughtsman.

Two important paintings have been added to the permanent collection of the Brooklyn Museum, *The Lady with the Hydrangeas*, by Henri Caro-Delvaille, and *Cattle on the Plains* by Émile van Marcke (1827-1890.)

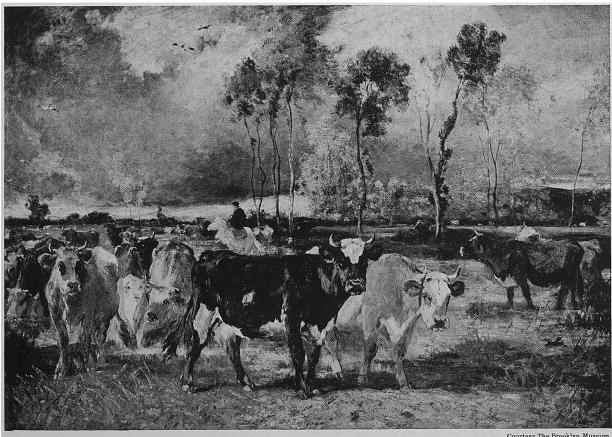
Few contemporary painters exhibit such mastery, such true art in their work as does Caro-Delvaille. One can not fail to become enthusiastic about his painting, and certainly this fine portrait, *The Lady with the Hydrangeas*, is a possession of which the Brooklyn Museum may well be proud. It is no exagger-

ration to say that Caro-Delvaille is a keen psychologist. This is a valuable endowment when it not only leads to truthful portraiture, but when it also becomes subtly strong as the results of its

observations being recorded within the arrangement of form which results, as in the instance of Caro-Delvaille's art, from a remarkable sense of harmonious composition. In this artist's work there is,



HENRI CARO DELVAILLE



CATTLE ON THE PLAINS

Courtesy The Brooklyn Museum ÉMILE VAN MARCKE (1827-1890)

I think one will find, hint of the influence (though assuredly not an influence suggested through imitation), of such masters as Ingres, Manet and Whistler. We will feel, I think, that Caro-Delvaille's portraits suggest that this artist has studied the painters just named, has studied and has appreciated them, but with a constructive appreciation. We may be thankful, too, for the impress of Caro-Delvaille's training in the atelier of Léon Bonnat. It has been said that no painter has more skilfully given the truthful presentment of the Parisiennewe may be sure no contemporary painter has done this more artistically.

It is indeed a true artist who can paint cattle artistically, interestingly, sincerely. Troyon was such a master; Emile van Marcke was another. Van Marcke's Cattle on the Plains is one of the best things he did, a remarkably successful work of its sort, a sort we have, of late years been somewhat prone to neglect,

until reminded by some such masterpiece of the fickleness of public taste. Van Marcke was born at Sèvres ninety-two years ago. That he studied under Troyon might well be guessed from his work, and yet Van Marcke's is an originality definitely his own in many ways. Few painters of cattle have been as successful in grouping, have produced compositions more noble in their interpretation of nature. There is much, everything, that is familiar in the canvas here reproduced, but there is, at the same time nothing commonplace in it. Van Marcke's works are to be found in some of the leading private collections in America, though he is not so fully represented in our museum collections. Canvases by this master are in the Astor, Vanderbilt and Walters collections and their acquisition has, through these years, come to have its judgment sustained. One may speak of this matter at length without the slightest over-estimation.